

Contributions

The Broken Hearted

The world has broken hearts, I know,
Ah! Mine is broken too;
For wounds and hurts, too many they!
And kindnesses too few!

A broken and a contrite heart
My God will not despise.
Whose blood was spilled on Calvary
Still hears his children's cries.

Thy tender mercy kindly show,
Thy grace to us be given,
And grant the broken-hearted, Lord,
The ministry of Heaven.

Emily Beatrice Gnagey, in New York Observer.

FATHER TIME, AND HIS FRIENDS

B. C. MOOMAW

It was a time for banqueting, for the meeting of friends, for reminiscence and congratulation, for was it not the last day of the last year of the century? Hoary with his hundred years the old century had lain him down to his last rest. His last sun had set, and the stars which are unmindful of centuries and cycles were abroad in their armies and processions. On this last night of the dying century three friends met in a banqueting hall spacious as the green earth, spacious as the cerulean dome above it; met there to commune of the times that were flown; and of the new time that was coming.

"Welcome to this hospitable hall," said Father Time. "Thrice welcome. All that I have is yours."

A kindly smile lighted up his venerable countenance as he thus addressed his two guests, Death and Life.

"It is the end of the century that you and I have sown," said he to life; "and that you and I have reaped," he continued, turning to Death. "We be old friends indeed, and bound together in this husbandry of the world."

The radiance which shone from the youthful countenance of Life grew more effulgent. He seemed to be lost in delightful meditation. "See," said he, turning the ample folds of his robe; "what wonderful seed of the harvested century I am about to sow in this wide field of the century that dawns."

"And I will nourish it," said Father Time.

"And I will reap it," said Death.

For a space there was silence in this banqueting hall. The music of the spheres, the pathetic voices of nature, the sobbing of the sea, the moaning of the winds, the chant of the forests, ceased as these words were spoken, for they were words weighted with worlds and winged with eternities.

"It may not be so forever," replied Life bending his earnest gaze upon the dark countenance of Death. "It may not be so even to the end of the coming hundred years, for a voice has spoken that your reign is short; and yours too, Father Time."

"We know it," replied the two. "We know it." "It tells me that 'time shall be no more.'"

"And it tells me," said Death, "that I shall find a grave which knows no resurrec-

tion. It is a hard fate, for after all, I have been the friend of the world."

"A friend in disguise, perhaps," said Father Time with accent of irony.

"A friend, nevertheless," insisted Death. "And I do not understand why men have made me appear so terrible. Am I the grim and horrible phantom they picture me?"

"I cannot say," replied Father Time, "that you are quite so attractive as our young friend here, who never seems to grow old. That stern rigor of the brow, that smileless mouth, that dreadful eye—ah, my friend, I do not wonder that the world trembles, and the light becomes dim, and the music ceases at sight of you, or the mention of your name. And then you know that record of yours, that career of eternal blight. You have ravaged me of all my children, and made me this night desolate, yet I am bound to you in a partnership which cannot cease until I am no more."

The venerable form of Father Time visibly shook with emotion at this passionate outburst. He seemed to be moved with a gathering indignation. "Your methods have been, it seems to me, needlessly cruel and relentless. At this very moment you are butchering people thru out the earth with your old-time ferocity. You are slaughtering, drowning, starving men, women and children, just as you used to do a thousand years ago. Think of that Indian famine. You shouldn't be surprised that you seem unto the children of men as a vision of horror."

"In what light do they regard that scythe of yours?" retorted Death with a frown.

"My enemies have slandered me in that particular," replied Father Time, "because I have been compelled to do your errands. They see me with the scythe, and they suppose that of course I use it, while as a matter of fact I only carry it for you. I would be very glad to be rid of it. I am growing old, and growing weary—wearied of the heavy burden of the ages, and the heavier burden of your service. My reputation has greatly suffered by doing your errands, and on account of it the whole world speaks disrespectfully of me."

"Tis nothing to what they say of me," replied Death. "And you have not helped me any, as you should have done, by explaining that in spite of appearances to the contrary my mission was a benevolent one. I put an end to the sorrows and troubles for which you alone are responsible, and which in the course of your career you bring to the children of men. I relieve them from the feebleness of age, the bondage of poverty, and the pangs of disease. I rid the world of the wicked, and introduce the righteous to a blessed and eternal rest. What a curse you would be to the world were it not for my kindly intervention. Is it not a fact that for ages and ages you kept mankind in ignorance of this benevolent mission of mine? You have allowed history to slander me in a most outrageous manner; and yet you have

known that we must stand or fall together, and that the termination of our friendship would be the termination of our career."

"Old friends," gently intervened Life, and as he spoke there was a glow upon his brow as of a kingly crown; "old friends who have been in partnership for so many thousands of years should not engage in useless recrimination. The past is behind us. The future dawns, and its brighter light prophecies the waning of your kingdom and the increase of mine. Behold the light of the new century gilding yon mountain tops. The propitious moment for my sowing is at hand, and we three must make a swift compact for the coming hundred years. What shall it be?"

"I," said Father Time, "will unlock many a door of opportunity, and many a door of knowledge, which heretofore I have kept tightly shut. And I will deal more mercifully and gently with the sorrowful world."

"And I," said Death, "will leave off many of my old sins. I will abolish war and famine, and destroy the habitations of cruelty. I will calm many of the pangs of disease; and laying aside the terror of my countenance I will come to the weary children of men as one who bears the balm of restful sleep, and the witchery of sweet dreams."

"And I," said Life, will sow more and more of that beautiful plant, Life Everlasting, whose harvesting is neither for Time nor for Death, but for the angels who come out of the shadowless glory."

AS IT IS AT THE OPENING OF THE CENTURY

J. C. MACKEY

During the Old Testament economy the prophets came closely in touch with current events. They marked for their own, and future days the march of God's providence. They did not fear to rebuke and exhort kings and peoples, as well as cheer and encourage their despondent hearts. They were men of profound wisdom, discerning the signs of the times, and knowing what Israel ought to do. So we, as God's people, at the opening of the twentieth century, must be awake to the voices of divine providence, and observe the lessons to be learned from passing events.

We dare not close our eyes to the plain fact that, at the beginning of the century there is much evil to be discerned. And, while we are not insensible to the great good that greets us, we wish to especially notice the doubtful features that face us.

First, The late census has revealed this fact, that the centralization of population is rapidly advancing. One hundred years ago three per cent. of our people lived in the cities, now nearly or quite thirty per cent. are found in these great centers. The proper government of large cities is a question still unsettled, and replete with danger to the body politic. This congestion of population is, to my mind, a serious evil. Vice is sure to breed vice, and crime begets crime. In the cities we find, notwithstanding the many notable examples of purity, general moral